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THE BEDELL LECTURES, 1889

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THE HISTORICAL CHRIST, THE  
MORAL POWER OF HISTORY

BY THE

REV. DAVID H. <sup>OC</sup>GREER, D.D.

RECTOR OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH, NEW YORK

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## EXTRACTS

From the communication of the donors to the Board of Trustees of the Theological Seminary of the Diocese of Ohio and Kenyon College.

CLEVELAND, June 21, 1880.

GENTLEMEN:

We have consecrated and set apart for the service of God the sum of \$5,000, to be devoted to the establishment of a lecture or lectures in the Institutions at Gambier, on the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion; or the Relations of Science and Religion.

We ask permission of the Trustees to establish the lecture immediately, with the following provisions:

The lecture or lectures shall be delivered biennially on Founders' Day (if such a day shall be established), or other appropriate time. During our lifetime, or the lifetime of either of us, the nomination of the lectureship shall rest with us.

The interest for two years on the fund, less the sum necessary to pay for the publication, shall be paid to the Lecturer.

The Lecturer shall also have one half of the net profits of the publication during the first two years after the date of publication. All other profits shall be the property of the Board, and shall be added to the capital of the lectureship.

We express our preference that the lecture or lectures shall be delivered in the Church of the Holy Spirit, if such building be in existence; and shall be delivered in the presence of all the members of the Institutions under the authority of the Board.

We ask that the day on which the lecture or the first of each series of lectures shall be delivered, shall be declared a holiday.

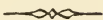
We wish that the nomination to this lectureship shall be restricted by no other consideration than the ability of the appointee to discharge the duty to the highest glory of God in the completest presentation of the subject. We desire that the lectures shall be published in uniform shape, and that a copy of each shall be placed in the libraries of Bexley Hall, Kenyon College, and of the Philomethesian and the Nu Pi Kappa Society. Asking the favorable consideration of the Board of Trustees,

We remain with great respect,

G. T. BEDELL,  
JULIA BEDELL.

The Board accepted the gift, approved the terms, named All Saints' Day, November the first, as Founders' Day, and made it a holiday.

## LECTURE FIRST.



*“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up.”—ACTS i. 1.*

THE author of the Acts was the author also of the third gospel. Both of them were written by St. Luke, and both are biographical. In the gospel he has given a biographical sketch of Jesus Christ. In the Acts he has given a biographical sketch of some of the apostles of Christ, but more particularly of the apostle Paul. He had come into close, personal contact with these two remarkable lives, and from his personal knowledge he tells us he has written out

these two descriptions of them; and yet, although they are two lives, and very widely separated from each other, as we shall presently see, St. Luke seems to speak as though they were but one, as though the life of St. Paul and of the other apostles were but a continuation of the life of Jesus Christ. "The former treatise have I made," he says, "of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up," intimating thus that in this latter treatise he is about to tell what Jesus continued to do and teach after His removal in bodily form from the earth. And this suggests the subject to which I will ask your attention in these lectures; namely: *The Historical Christ as the Moral Power of History*. Or, the two lives of Christ; one of them in the gospel record, and which, as there presented, is a unique and finished life; and the other in human history, which is not finished yet, and will not be until the

story of human existence in this world has been fully told. I hope in this manner to be able to suggest, if not to elaborate, a cumulative argument in behalf of the Christian religion, which may not be unworthy of the occasion.

In the present lecture I will ask you to consider the life of Jesus Christ in the gospel record. In order to appreciate the uniqueness of that life, it is only necessary to put it alongside of other lives and note the impression produced by the comparison, or, rather, by the contrast. I do not mean that the life of Jesus Christ, as described in the gospel record, has a supernatural element in it, and is in that sense unique, for that is a uniqueness which some persons do not concede to it, and I will not therefore assume it. I mean rather that it is unique in its moral character and that it displays a form of goodness to us which has no parallel in the whole field of biography. Take, for instance, the life of St.

Paul himself, certainly one of the best and most exalted lives of which we have any knowledge, and bring it close to that of Jesus Christ, and then with a quick transition glance from one to the other. In St. Paul we see, notwithstanding his fine and superior character, a man like ourselves, who has our human defects, our human faults and failings, who, after all, is made of our common clay, who, like us, at times repents of what he has done and tries to do better, crying out: "O, wretched man that I am!" and pressing on toward the goal. That is our method, our fashion; we understand it. Then suddenly look from St. Paul to Jesus Christ, and it is like going at once from the darkness into the daylight, or as though some cloud hanging before the face of the sun, had, in an instant, melted away into glory; for there in Jesus Christ is a life, which, from first to last, has no repentance in it, which never acknowledges an error, never has a regret. Think, if



you can think it, of a goodness which has no contrition in it, no sense of sin and ill desert, no feeling of personal unworthiness, no consciousness of having made a mistake in either speech or action, no self-reproach and upbraiding, no asking for forgiveness. That is not our fashion. There is something strange, awful, in the goodness of Jesus Christ; something that makes us stand with bated breath and uncovered head before it. Other men have had to fight for goodness; their story is a story of conflict, of labored pursuit, and effort; and as they have advanced in goodness they have become more painfully conscious of the evil in them, and have been made to realize more keenly their moral defects and failures. "As an individual," says Dr. Strauss, "becomes morally purified, the moral feeling itself is more acutely sensitive to the slightest impurity of motive and to the slightest deviation from the ideal." St. Paul, the great Christian

apostle, although so good to us, is, to himself, at times, the very chief of sinners. St. Augustine, the great Christian theologian, as he draws near to the end of his illustrious career, finds his principal solace in reading repeatedly the penitential Psalms. Tertullian, the great Christian purist, is forever lamenting his "fever heats of impatience," and saying how unworthy he is, "being a man of no good," to preach to others of goodness; while Origen, the great Christian mystic, discoursing in the City of Jerusalem on the message of God to the wicked, bursts into such a storm of tears over his own shortcomings that he is unable to proceed. This is a feature that we find in all Christian biography, and not only in all Christian biography, but in all the best biography outside of Christendom. "In letters," says Confucius, "I am perhaps equal to other men, but the character of the superior man, carrying out in his conduct what he

professes, is what I have not yet attained. It may simply be said of me that I strive to become such." Mohammed in the Koran confesses his sins repeatedly; so does Zoroaster; so does Sakyi Mouni; for the life of the Buddha is a struggle with evil desire, and the tree is pointed out in the east to-day where his anguish was at last appeased, and under which he is said to have gotten the victory. Measured by our standard, these were good men, but like other men, better and worse, they grew by degrees in goodness. They began with the consciousness of moral defect, and became good after awhile. They started in the valley and worked their way through many slips and failures gradually up to the summit. They reached the top by climbing. But Jesus Christ does not climb; He is there, without climbing, on His distant mountain-top when we first behold Him. He grows, to be sure, in wisdom, and waxes strong in spirit, but, as Dr. Bushnell sug-

gests, it is not a growth effected by a process of rectification, in which we see confidence checked by defeat, passion moderated by reason, smartness sobered by experience, and the gradual mending of follies and removal of evil distempers. It is like the growth of a flower, harmoniously unfolding, complete at every stage—childhood, youth and manhood—and perfect from the beginning. His goodness as we see it in the gospel story, does not look like an evolution, but like a revelation. As though it were not so much the result of a victory over sin as the exhibition, rather, of a life that knew no sin. It does not seem, like other forms of goodness with which we are familiar, to have come up out of the ground, but, in some mysterious manner, to have been let down from above; and this we say, not because we have been taught to apprehend it so, through the medium of a dogmatic philosophy, but simply because this is what we see, because it is

the impression which it makes upon us, as though it were indeed the full-orbed manifestation in our human sky of that ideal goodness; that perfect love; that spotless purity; that immaculate virtue; that absolute and eternal right in which the heart of man instinctively believes, but which it nowhere finds on the earth, and which it attributes to God.

Again, not only is the goodness of Jesus Christ differentiated in quality from all other goodness, but also in its quantity; that is, it has more in it, is more comprehensive in its reach and scope, and marked by a greater variety of moral traits and ingredients. Other men have represented certain types of goodness; Jesus Christ represents them all, and is the best illustration of each. His character is not one sided, but full and many sided, and no one excellence is sacrificed to or abortived by another. Single in His purpose, and yet He is not narrow; broad in His sympathy, and yet He is

not indifferent ; zealous in His devotion to truth, and yet He is not partisan ; charitable in His thought and speech, and yet He is not unjust. Every conceivable virtue is exhibited by Him, and yet in perfect balance with all other virtues. Hence it is no single adjective can set Him off ; no single word describe Him ; no single definition of any creed exhaust Him ; and whatever the path of moral excellence in which men try to move, they discover sooner or later that Jesus Christ is there before them, and are made to hear His voice saying "Follow me." Hence it is, also, that all types of virtue have appropriated Him as their model ; that all forms of philanthropy have recognized Him as their guide ; that all sects have adopted Him ; that all parties have appealed to Him ; that all ages have admired Him ; that all nations have been able to serve Him ; that all estates and conditions of men have found their hope and inspiration in Him. The knights

of old, as Dr. Farrar remarks, saw in Him the mirror of all chivalry ; the monks, the pattern of all asceticism ; the philosophers, the enlightener in all truth. To a Fenelon He has seemed the most rapt of mystics ; to a Vincent De Paul, the most practical of philanthropists ; to an English poet,

“ The best of men that e'er wore earth about Him,  
Was . . . . .  
. . . . .  
The first true gentleman that ever breathed ; ”

And amid all the confusion of the present age, with so many babel voices sounding in our ears ; so many teachers teaching ; so many prophets prophesying ; so many conflicting oracles clamoring to be heard ; one thing at least is clear, and that is that the ideal life which every one feels instinctively he ought to live is found in Jesus Christ, and that there is no rule of conduct so excellent in itself, so noble in its effects upon the individual and society

at large, as that which He both illustrates and enjoins.

Looking, then, at the story of Jesus Christ which St. Luke has given in his former treatise, not in its miraculous features, which by some are questioned, and which therefore I will not introduce into this discussion, but simply in that goodness which it discloses, in that moral excellence which is admired by all and questioned by none, and we are made to perceive how widely it is differentiated *toto cælo*, by the width of the whole heavens from all other lives. Those other lives are more or less like our own, and although in some instances they exhibit a goodness which is far beyond us, yet, as has been observed, we can see the steps, we can trace the path between them and ourselves, whereas around Jesus Christ "there is a vacant space" where the continuity of the path is broken, where no steps appear, and "over which no man yet, in this life, has trod."



Here then we find, in the literature of the world, a moral portraiture which has no parallel in the whole field of biography, and to which all civilization appeals as the highest conceivable standard of all moral excellence. This, at least, is a fact in regard to which there is no dispute. "No perfect piety will ever be possible," says Dr. Strauss, "without the presence of Jesus in the heart." "Thou, O Christ," says Renan, "shalt become the corner-stone of humanity so completely, that to tear thy name from the world, would be to rend it to its foundations." "When I come to consider His life," says the French critic La Mennais, "the marvellous mingling in Him of grandeur and simplicity, of sweetness and force, that incomprehensible perfection which never for a moment fails, neither in the intimate familiarity of confidence nor in the solemnity of instructions addressed by Him to the people at large, neither in the joyfulness of the festival at

Cana, nor amid the anguish of Gethsemane, neither in the glory of His triumph, nor in the ignominy of His punishment ; when I contemplate this grand marvel which the world has seen only once, and which has renewed the world, I do not ask myself if Christ was divine, —I should be rather tempted to ask myself if He were human.” “About the life and sayings of Jesus,” says Mr. John Stuart Mill, “there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which must place the prophet of Nazareth in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who has ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity ; nor even now would it be easy even for an unbeliever to find

a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life." This then, I say, is at least a fact in regard to which there is no dispute, that the ideal life for all mankind has somehow found its way into the literature of the world.

And now, let us take another step in the development of the argument: How did it come to be there, this ideal life, in the world's literature? In what manner can we explain its existence there? These are inquiries which cannot be avoided: inquiries, too, which at the present time are receiving much attention; and it is not surprising. Reason has been defined as "a relation seeking impulse," an impulse that is to trace the connection of things, to find out how they originated, the source from which they proceeded, the antecedent influences which have called them forth and which alone can

explain them. It is not strange therefore that this "age of reason" should be studying so industriously such a unique and exceptional fact as the appearance in literature of the character of Jesus Christ and trying to find how it has come to be there. It is indeed—not only because of its scientific interest, but because also of its practical bearing—the question of the hour, and is coming more and more to be so regarded. The finest thought, the sharpest acumen, the ripest scholarship, are being devoted to it, and there is scarcely an author of note today who is able to keep Jesus Christ out of his manuscript.

Here let it be observed that the problem which is thus presented to modern thought by the Christian Religion is different from those presented by all other religions. Those other religions are studied with the neuter pronoun. *What* doctrines do they teach, *what* duties do they enjoin? Their influence is not due to the person-

ality of their founders: they would in fact survive without their founders. Take away Mohammed, and Islam still remains: take away Buddha, and the Light of Asia—such as it is—still shines: take away Zoroaster, and the fire still burns with unabated brightness on the Persian altar and hill-top: take away Confucius, and the religion of the Celestial Empire is in no wise impaired: but, take away Jesus Christ, and Christianity is gone. His name is stamped on every page of the New Testament writings, on every chapter of ecclesiastical history; it is found explicitly or implicitly in every creed, in every liturgy, in every form of worship: for Christianity in its essential and distinctive character is simply Jesus Christ and the influence which He exerts. And so from the outset, wherever the great tidal wave of the Christian Religion swept in its propagandist path, among the peoples of the earth, from the shores of Palestine across the waters of the Medi-

terranean, through the mountains of Asia Minor, along the banks of the Danube and the Tiber, to the far-off coasts of the British Isles, it is the form of the Personal Christ that is always seen on the top-most crest of the wave, commanding attention, exciting wonder and provoking thought. While therefore there are other religions in the world of venerable age—older some of them than the Christian Religion, and having more disciples—it is none the less true, as Mr. Lecky remarks, that, “It was reserved for the Christian Religion to present to the world an ideal Character, which through all the changes of 1800 years has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love, and shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions.” The problem therefore presented to modern thought by the Christian Religion is a unique problem: it has no parallel in any other religion. The problem is this: where did the Character of Jesus

Christ come from? That is the question. We do not meet it by an attempt to show that religion in general is the natural product of fear or the sublimated residuum of a belief in ancestral ghosts. It is not religion in general we are called upon to consider, but the Christian Religion in particular: and the particular thing that confronts us in the Christian Religion is the Character of Jesus Christ. Where did that Character come from: how did it get into literature: by what rational process can we explain most satisfactorily and with the least number of difficulties its existence there? That is the problem upon which modern thought is so industriously working; and with what result? Let us see.

Half a century since, when the science of historical criticism was in its infancy, the theory was advanced by certain German critics that the character of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the New Testament books does not rest upon an histor-

ical basis ; that it has no fact commensurate with or corresponding to it, and that it has come into literature, not as a literary fraud exactly—for even the wildest criticism would hardly make that assertion—but as a literary growth and expansion, or, in other words, as a late and gradual mythopœic development. To substantiate this theory the attempt was made to show that the New Testament books are not the product of the apostolic age, as had been up to that time believed, but of a period very much later, when sufficient time had elapsed for the Prophet of Galilee to have become idealized by mythical accretions and exaggerated stories about Him. The Christian world, it was said, had acquiesced in the claim of the apostolic origin of those New Testament books simply because that claim had not been critically examined. Like many other books purporting to be ancient of date, they had been accepted as genuine, so it was alleged, for the sole



reason that they had a venerable look about them and had always been so regarded, and that, like those other books, the New Testament writings, when weighed in the balance of historical criticism, would be found wanting. The statement was startling and revolutionary, and coming from men of recognized ability and scholarship, it created no little uneasiness. Christian people were smitten first with fear and then with indignation. Historical criticism, they declared, was going a little too far, was becoming too bold and presumptuous ; the Christian writings were sacred, their apostolic origin must not be called in question, must not even be investigated, and whoever ventured to do so, was laying profane and violent hands upon the Ark of God, and liable to have his Christian faith impeached. Spite of this remonstrance, however, the critical investigation of the Christian writings went on. Those writings were a part of the world's literature,

and must be examined, therefore, in regard to date and authorship in the same manner precisely as other writings. The fact of their being sacred and dealing with sacred subjects was not sufficient to exempt them. The Christian world might dig a trench and build a wall about them, and blocking up the way of approach, exclaim, "No Thoroughfare," but historical criticism was not to be deterred by such vain devices. It recognized no distinction between sacred and profane: all writings to it were alike, and the apostolic claims of the New Testament books must be investigated by the same canons of inquiry applied to other books, let the consequences be what they might. Well, what have they been? The experience which Mr. Leslie Stephen relates as having happened to himself in the Alps, has happened here also: "As I fell back," he says, "my foot missed its former support, and I was falling through the air. All was over with me now, the mountain

sprang upward with a bound, but before the fall had well begun, before the air had begun to whistle past me, my movement was suddenly arrested ; with a shock of surprise I found myself lying on a broad bed of deep moss, as comfortably and securely as in my bed at home." With an equal shock of surprise those persons who feared that historical criticism when applied to the Christian Scriptures might have the effect to disprove or render doubtful their apostolic origin, have been made to perceive that there was not the slightest cause for fear : they have lost their hold indeed upon their former poor support of tradition, but only to fall back upon a more substantial, because more rational, basis, and instead of believing the New Testament books to be apostolic productions on the slim sanction of a venerable and uncritical opinion, they believe them now to be such on the strength of a critical evidence so vast and full that it has no parallel in the case of

any other ancient writing that has been transmitted to us. The whole trend of biblical criticism during the past few years has been in this direction, towards vindicating the antiquity, the apostolic antiquity of the New Testament books in which we find the character of Jesus Christ portrayed. Some of those books have been better authenticated than others. Some of them, perhaps, have been added to or subtracted from, and were not written originally in their present form. These are matters which modern biblical criticism has not yet determined with a universal concensus ; but this has been determined beyond all reasonable doubt : first, that much if not most of the New Testament literature was in existence in the apostolic age, and, second, that in that literature the character of Jesus Christ appears substantially, if not precisely, as we find it now in the completed New Testament canon. Historical criticism, therefore, when applied to the

New Testament books, instead of tending to confirm the mythical theory, which alleges that the character of Jesus Christ is the product of a late mythopœic development, has, so far at least, tended to destroy it. Still it may be said it is only a tendency, and that not until all critics are agreed in regard to the apostolic origin, in their present form, of all the New Testament books, and a perfect consensus has been established, are we warranted in making the positive assertion that the mythical theory has been in fact and altogether destroyed, that it has no longer anything left to build on. Very well, let us see : in regard to some of the New Testament Books there is a perfect consensus. All critics are agreed, even the most radical, like Renan, Baur and Kuenen, that the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians, the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistle to the Romans were written by St. Paul not later than twenty-five or twenty-eight years after

the death of Jesus. Taking then simply this minimum number of the New Testament books concerning which there is no longer any dispute, any diversity of opinion, in regard to which all critics are agreed, and what do we find? The same unique and exceptional moral portraiture reflected upon and shining through their pages which we elsewhere see in all the New Testament Scriptures and which has been ever since, and is to-day, after 1800 years have elapsed, the ideal life of mankind. Observe I do not say that the whole body of ecclesiastical Christianity is there. I do not say that all the doctrines of the Christian Church are there, or that if they were there, that would be a sufficient evidence of their truth. That is not at present my contention. I am not trying to show that the facts and doctrines of the Christian Religion are true by quoting in their behalf the testimony of St. Paul. No, the testimony of St. Paul may be good or bad, may be worth much or

little; as far as my present argument is concerned, I have nothing whatever to do with it. I am considering now not St. Paul as a witness to certain disputed facts or controverted doctrines, but St. Paul as a writer, St. Paul as a contributor to the world's literature, and my point is this, that in that literature, whose date, by a unanimous verdict, is not later than twenty-five or twenty-eight years after the death of Jesus, we find the same portraiture of that ideal life which we elsewhere find in the New Testament canon, and which is to-day both the wonder of the whole civilized world and the inspiration of its highest conduct. So manifestly is this the case that even if all the rest of the New Testament were destroyed, or if criticism should prove it to be the product of a later age, we should still be able from these four epistles of St. Paul to fashion a Jesus Christ possessing every excellence, invested with every virtue, representing in Himself every form and

quality of goodness which we find attributed to Him by the four Evangelists in their gospel story. Conceding then everything which the most radical biblical critics exact, and taking only what the most radical biblical critics admit, we find from their own admissions that the character of Jesus Christ, instead of being the product of a late mythopœic development, had been not only conceived and brought forth, but already matured, and that it existed in thought at least when St. Paul's Epistles were written. Aye, more than that, "The stately galleon," to borrow the simile of another, "has taken on its cargo at a point much higher up the stream than where we first see it sweeping down to the sea." For many years before his epistles were written, St. Paul had been a believer in Jesus Christ: for many years he had been engaged in the hard and perilous task of setting Him forth to the world. What that Jesus Christ was like, in whom all these years



he had been believing, and for whom all these years he had been so earnestly working, he shows us in his epistles. The portrait itself, however, was not invented then, but is evidently very much older. It was simply placed on exhibition then in the world's picture gallery. He simply draws aside the curtain at that time and makes known to men what that portrait is which at least seventeen years before (as we learn from the Epistle to the Galatians—three years having elapsed between his conversion and his first visit to Jerusalem, and fourteen years between his first and second visit) which at least seventeen years before had so completely fascinated him, and which has since so strongly held the admiring gaze of the world. Conceding, therefore, everything which the most radical biblical critics exact, leaving out of the argument every book or page of the New Testament literature in regard to whose origin in the apostolic age a single doubt is expressed, and this is

what we find : that eight or ten years after the death of Jesus, there is in the world a conception of Him which corresponds, I think we may say, precisely with the biographical delineation of Him in the gospel story.

And now we are prepared to take still another step in the development of the argument. Let us bear in mind what that argument up to this point has been. We stated first that the life of Jesus Christ presents a form of goodness, of moral excellence to us, which not only has no parallel in the whole field of human biography, but than which no higher life is conceivable. This at least is a fact which is not called in question by any fair-minded man. We next proceeded to inquire where that life came from, and said that this was the problem presented by the Christian Religion to us, and by which it is differentiated from all other religions. Where did the life of Jesus Christ come from ? It has a place in the world's litera-

ture. When and how did it get there? In pursuing this inquiry we saw that historical criticism from which at first so much was apprehended, while tending to establish the apostolic origin of all the New Testament books, has shown beyond all question that four of those books at least were written not more than twenty-eight years after the death of Jesus and that in those four New Testament books the same ideal life of Jesus Christ is found whose appearance in literature we are trying to account for. We have seen further that those four books are letters, and that that ideal life which they disclose to our view was not a new conception coincident with the date of the letters themselves, but had been known to their author a number of years (at least seventeen) before the letters were written. This has been our argument so far. I am aware that it has been very meagrely stated. The time at my disposal would admit of nothing more: but I believe that if inade-

quately it has been fairly stated, and that the conclusion to which it leads is unimpeachable, that eight or ten years after the death of Jesus, or, at the most, some twenty-five years after, there exists in the world that same sublime and exalted conception of Him which is elsewhere found in the New Testament Scriptures and which from that date down to this has been by a universal admission the ideal life of mankind. If then that life be a literary invention, it must have been invented during that period. Was it then invented, or did it actually exist on the earth, and is it an historical life? That is the question to which we have now come. That too is the question to which modern criticism has come. A few years since it was discussing the authenticity of the New Testament books, whether or not they are the productions, as they purport to be, of the apostolic age. That is now rapidly becoming an anachronistic discussion. The destructive results antici-

pated from it have not been realized, and sceptical criticism is passing now into another stage. Having failed to show that the New Testament books were written at a period very much later than the apostolic era, and that their testimony cannot be successfully impeached on that ground, it is now trying to show that the writers of those books, although truthful in character and honest in intention, and contemporary perhaps with the facts which they undertake to report, were not competent to give an accurate report of the facts. Testimony, it is said, in order to be trustworthy, must be associated with scientific training, and that this is a training which the men of that period did not possess. They lived, we are told, in a time of great credulity, when men were wont to believe in myths, marvels and legends, when they could not easily report even the simplest fact without imparting to it some fabulous adornment, and hence it is that the testi-

mony of the apostolic writers has, as testimony, but very little value. This I say has now become the contention of sceptical thought. This is the way, having practically abandoned its former mode of attack, in which it seeks to invalidate the New Testament witness to Christ. But this you will observe does not meet the question which at present we are considering. That question is: How did the character of Jesus Christ find its way into the thought of the apostolic age? It exists there: How did it get there? We are not considering the value of a testimony to a disputed fact. We are considering a fact. A few years after the death of Jesus that sublime conception of Him prevailed which is prevalent now, and has been ever since, as the finest portraiture of moral excellence that has ever appeared in either life or letters, and from which the most radical sceptic to-day in his attempt at moral reform gathers his inspiration. The existence of that

portraiture in the apostolic age is a fact. Does the credulity of that age explain it? As I interpret history, that was a sceptical age, very much like our own, when pyrrhonism, stoicism and epicureanism and those other kindred forms of thought prevailed which indicate, not the presence, but the absence of faith, and when, under the thin guise of an excessive and superficial religiousness, there lurked a deep and wide-spread doubt concerning all religions. But waiving this, and conceding that it was a credulous age, how does that account for the appearance in it of the portrait of Jesus Christ? The portrait is there. Who painted it? Is it the historian's work or the poet's: the annalist's or the artist's? There is no sufficient reason for regarding it as the historian's, says the nineteenth century sceptic, for the testimony of that age is comparatively worthless, and hence we can never be sure that the beautiful picture of the character of Jesus Christ which we

find embodied in that credulous age is a veritable copy from life. Very well : Then it must be the artist's ; some poet or some school of poetry must have invented the character : some school of poetry, too, so highly endowed with the faculty of poetic creation that it was not able to distinguish between what was fanciful and what was real and true, and which accepted in all good faith as an historical fact its own imaginary productions. Where among the Jewish people of the first century do we find such a school of poetry ? Who among the fishermen of Galilee or among their proselytes was such a consummate artist ? They have been called, those early Christian disciples, by many excellent names ; many admirable characteristics have been attributed to them, but never for one moment has it been intimated, even by those who esteemed and revered them most, that they possessed an artistic temperament superior to any which Greece itself has pro-



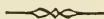
duced, or that they were capable of creating a work of art to which that great and gifted country in its highest stage of development has furnished no parallel. Observe, again, I am not quoting the testimony of those early disciples to prove that the facts, miraculous or otherwise, which we find in the gospel story, are true. I am calling your attention to something which modern criticism does not and cannot question—a fact which is not disputed—that there in the apostolic age a portrait is found of the ideal life of mankind, and am saying with reference to it, that if it be not the work of the chronicler, it must be the work of the artist, and if the work of the artist, then of an artist, or of a school of art, whose creative power has never been, not only surpassed, but equalled. Is such an hypothesis probable, is it conceivable: that those unlettered Christians of the apostolic age belonging to a nation notorious for its intolerance: bigoted, narrow-minded and

fanatical, and looking with supreme contempt on all other nations, were capable of inventing, and did invent, and honestly invent, mistaking their own literary invention for an historical reality—a task which presupposes a creative genius of the highest conceivable order—did honestly invent a type of personal excellence so admirable in form, so comprehensive in scope and so pure in quality, that it has been ever since, and is to-day, the light of the civilized world. Is such an hypothesis conceivable? If not, then we must fall back on the only other alternative: That the character of Jesus Christ is historical and real, that it has an existence, not in the air, simply as a work of art, but on the earth as a fact; and if the men who have reported it were indeed the incompetent witnesses they are said to have been, by so much the more is it certain that the life which they have reported, and which, spite of their incompetency, they have so admirably disclosed, was not less but

greater than their representation of it. This, I say, is the only other alternative. The character of Jesus Christ, as we find it reflected in the apostolic age, is not fiction but fact, is not romance but reality, is not a beautiful dream, dreamt by the world in its childhood long ago, and which now in its awakening manhood the world is putting away—No, not a dream, but a life, a substantial form which appeared, having hands and feet, moving up and down the earth with bodily parts and members, and which came into literature only because it first came into history. Yes, and has been there ever since. “Holiest among the mighty, mightiest among the holy, lifting with its pierced hands empires off their hinges, turning the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governing the ages.”

Can such a life be trusted? We will be better prepared to answer that question, when, as in the next lecture, we see what that life has accomplished.

## LECTURE SECOND.



*“Nathanael saith: Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip saith: Come and see.”—ST. JOHN i. 46.*

THE question of Nathanael was not unreasonable, and if he was prejudiced it must be admitted he had some ground for prejudice. Nazareth was a community proverbially gross and frivolous, and inasmuch as people are apt to be affected in character by their surroundings, it was not easy to believe that one so pure and good as Israel's Christ could come from a place so bad. Nathanael's question, therefore, was not unreasonable, neither was Philip's answer. Persons and theo-

ries, if good and true, will bear examination, and the most effective way to remove a prepossession against them, or correct an erroneous opinion about them, is to give them an opportunity to prove themselves by experiment, and thus to make their own direct and beneficent impressions upon us. And so when the guileless Israelite asked, with a not unreasonable doubt, can a Nazarene be the Messiah, the wisest answer Philip could make was simply, "Come and see." I propose in this lecture to imitate the wisdom of that reply, to show you, in other words, how that remarkable life which St. Luke describes in his former treatise has reproduced itself in that subsequent life of mankind whose opening chapters he gives in his latter treatise. The subject, I know, is a large one, and if I were venturing to treat it in the historical method, with that fulness of incident and illustrative statement which such a method requires, I

should feel with the author of the fourth Gospel, and speaking with his pardonable hyperbole, that the world itself could not contain the books which should be written. That, however, is not the method which I shall pursue. My task is less ambitious, and yet while less ambitious, it is perhaps more satisfactory, for even if I could, in the time at my disposal, succeed in bringing all Christendom before you, it might be said in reply that Jesus Christ is not the author of Christendom, that other forces than those which He introduced have created it, and that, instead of proving my point, I had begun by assuming the very point to be proved. This, it seems to me, is the radical defect in all those works which attempt to show the Divine origin of the Christian Religion by giving an outline more or less full of that civilization where the Christian Religion prevails. Such works have their value. They tend to create a presumptive argument which is

not wanting in force, and yet in reading them one is apt to feel that there is after all some begging of the question in them, or that there is at least an important phase of the question, which if they do not altogether avoid, they do not sufficiently consider. If the so-called Christian civilization be the product of Christianity, it is a noble product, and no better evidence or stronger could be adduced to show that that religion is worthy of our trust and must be accepted by us as the guide of life, for whatever else, through the subtleties and sophistries of ingenious speculation we may bring ourselves to distrust, we cannot distrust, without doing violence to our moral nature, and thereby surrendering the surest ground of confidence which we possess, that power, whatever it may be, that has actually made for righteousness in human affairs. That power, I say, we must trust. If the Christian Religion be that power, we must trust the Christian Religion,

and if the Christian Religion be the personality of Jesus Christ, then, as practical men, we must trust Jesus Christ and take Him as our guide. Much of what He declares, concerning the character of God, for instance, and the reality of another life, may lie beyond our ken. We may not be able by our intellectual processes to apprehend or prove it. Such knowledge may be too wonderful for us, too high, we cannot attain to it, and if we had to depend entirely upon our own intellectual resources, while incompetent, of course, to deny it, we would be equally incompetent to affirm it, and could never be with reference to it anything else than agnostic. But by the suppositions of the case we are not dependent upon our own resources. Those teachings of Jesus Christ concerning the character of God and the reality of another life, are an inseparable and integral part of His personality. His personality is inconceivable without them, and we are sup-



posing that the personality of Jesus Christ in the totality of its make-up has created and still inspires that form of practical righteousness in our civilized life, than which, however faulty, no better has ever appeared; and that for nearly nineteen centuries it has energized history, producing revolutions and working out evolutions like nothing else which history discloses. We are supposing all this to be true of Jesus Christ, and what we say is this, that if it be true, then the personality of Jesus Christ is worthy of our confidence, and that when He speaks, not with His lips merely, but with His whole personality, concerning the character of God and the reality of another life, although these are things which lie beyond our range and are too high for us, yet as practical men seeking in the bewilderment of conflicting speculations for some practical guide that has been proved to be such by some practical experiment, we can do no better and

wiser thing than set to our seal that Jesus Christ is true.

I am aware that moral rectitude, such as every one recognizes in Jesus Christ, is not always an infallible guide to truth, and that purity of life has often been associated with great mistakes in judgment. The saintly character of the apostle Paul, Professor Huxley tells us, does not necessarily imply the absence of error in his teachings, as the saintly character of George Fox did not prevent that eminent Christian disciple from honestly holding and propagating many grotesque opinions. "The goodness of a man," says Professor Clifford, "does not justify us in accepting a belief upon the warrant of his authority, unless there are reasonable grounds for supposing that he knows the truth of what he affirms." Yes, precisely; but what are reasonable grounds, who is to be the judge, and how can we ascertain that the man who speaks has a sufficient knowledge to

speak with authority to us? We cannot bring his knowledge to the test of ours: For then our knowledge, being as great as his, there would be no need to consult him: We would know of ourselves and without him. How then can we ascertain that he knows the truth of what he affirms? Because, it may be said, the man is an expert in his particular department, biology, psychology, philosophy or science or metaphysics. But how do we know he is an expert, for experts differ? With equal natural gifts apparently, and equal devotion to their specialty, they do not always agree in their deliverances. Darwin believes that the principle of natural selection is sufficient to explain the descent of man in the totality of his nature from certain more primitive types. Wallace, on the contrary, while holding to the general truth of the theory of evolution, believes that there are certain parts of man's intellectual and moral nature that cannot be accounted for in that

manner. Experts differ. How shall we decide between them, or to what tribunal of last resort shall we carry their case for adjustment? Is there such a tribunal? There is: "By their fruits ye shall know them." This is the tribunal to which Philip referred Nathanael when he said to him, "Come and see," and this is the tribunal, the court of final appeal, which the common sense of mankind has recognized ever since. If the theories are found to work well, they are accepted as true, but if not, they are rejected as false, and that is the end of the matter. Are there not, however, certain kinds of truth, as, for instance, the one to which I have just referred, the principle of natural selection, which cannot be, from their very nature, submitted to this test? Well, if there are, we at least can never be assured of their truth. As far as we are concerned, they are as though they were not, and can never be anything else to us than more or less plausible theories

or doctrinaire speculations ; but that is not so much the case as we are wont to think. Some kinds of truth, indeed, are not immediately practical, but they become so after a while. However high in the air they start, they gravitate towards the earth, they find their way by a circuitous path into conduct, and the simplest action of every-day life is apt to be affected in time by the most recondite knowledge. "Though I care but little," says DeTocqueville, "about the study of philosophy, I have always been struck with the influence which it has exerted over the things which seem to be the least connected with it, and even over society in general, for abstract ideas, however metaphysical and apparently unpractical, penetrate at last, I know not how, into the realm of public morals." This then is the test to which all theories are sooner or later brought. This is the world's way, and there is no better, if indeed there is any other, of finding out

whether or not they are true. Have they worked well? Have they produced good results? The scholar may bring great learning to support them, the logician may use strong arguments to defend them, the metaphysician may show that they are in strict accord with the essential laws of thought, but if they have been tried and have broken down in the trial, then, spite of learning and dialectic and metaphysic, the common sense of mankind will reject and set them aside. But if, on the other hand, when submitted to a full and adequate probation, they have stood the test, and have proved themselves by experiment to be practically useful and good, then no matter what may be spoken in theoretical condemnation of them, no matter how foolish or erroneous or wanting in logical proof they may be said to be, the common sense of mankind will accept them as right and true; and if our civilization, in its moral features, be the

creation of Jesus Christ, if it be the product of His personality, and this personality necessarily include certain teachings concerning the character, God and the reality of another life, then, spite of all that may be said against or in detraction of Him, the common sense of mankind will set to its seal that Jesus Christ is true ; will declare Him to be worthy of confidence not only in matters of conduct but also in those matters of faith which in His life and teaching are so intimately associated with \* and help to make the conduct; and that there are reasonable grounds for supposing that He did know the truth of what He affirmed; for it has been tried and has been found to work well. That, I say, is the court of final appeal, recognized by the common sense of mankind, and who will venture to go against or impugn that verdict of common sense? It is the world's infallible Pope, the only one that has ever appeared on the earth whose decrees are

irreversible and whose authority is supreme.

And now we come to our fundamental question: is our civilization in its moral features the creation of Jesus Christ, has His power produced it? Here I remark, in the first place, that the power of goodness in this world is greater than the power of evil. This must be so, otherwise human existence, instead of having moved in a progressive path, would have been characterized by a deterioration, and would be much worse at the present time than it was at the outset, and that, I presume, will not be affirmed, for no matter how despondent some of us may be at times about our own generation, it will hardly be maintained, with the facts of history before our eyes, that there has not been, from first to last, a great advancement made. The advancement, to be sure, has not always been steady and uninterrupted, its course has been—to use Goethe's simile—spiral rather than



straight. Still there has been an advancement. The human race did not begin with goodness. It began with the absence of goodness, or innocence, and slowly through the centuries it has been coming more and more into the possession of it. The primitive man, as far as we know anything about him at all, albeit an innocent, was a very ignoble creature, and is so represented in the Bible, sensuous and superstitious, with but little enlightenment and power of self-control, making a fetich out of a serpent and yielding at once to the simplest form of temptation addressed to his bodily appetites: and if to-day we are something better than that, it must be due to the fact that the power of goodness in this world is greater than the power of evil. I remark, in the next place, that it is not goodness in the abstract that has conquered evil in this world, but goodness in the concrete—goodness in flesh and blood, goodness as we meet it bodied

forth in character, as we see it alive. Not goodness in the fine discourse or in the admirable essay, but goodness in the soul, that inmost centre, as Browning says, "Where truth abides in fulness," and whence, as from a throne, it speaks with authority to us. The orator who moves us most is the orator who is moved most, not necessarily who displays the most emotion, but whose own personality is quickened most by his speech. "If," says Horace to the sons of Piso, "you wish me to weep, there must be first of all a genuine grieving in you." (*"Sivis me flere dolendum, est primum, ipsi tibi."*) "Whoever," says John Milton, "would not be frustrate of his desire to write well in poetry, must be a true poet in his life, for, other things being equal, that will be the greatest and most effective verse, the soul of whose author is set on fire by the sentiment which it contains." What is true of poetry, of art and of literature in general, is equally true

of righteousness, and not until we see it in some one who is it, whose own personality is pervaded by it, whose soul gives living expression to it, does it speak with power to us and exert a commanding influence over us. Human nature is not a thing so docile that it can be tamed by fine and beautiful sentiments. Those sentiments, to be authoritative, must become personified, and no matter how true they may be, they do not have the power of truth until they somehow get incarnated and are seen, not merely in literature, but in actual life. No better illustration of this can be found than that which is furnished by the Roman world at the opening of the Christian era. It was an age whose literature has never been surpassed, not only in the beauty of its style, but in the nobleness of its sentiments, and no sublimer moral precepts can be anywhere seen, not even in the Christian Scriptures, than some of those which are inculcated so gracefully and epigrammati-

cally by the Senecas and the Ciceros and the Juvenals and the other classical writers of that time. Our sceptical friends are wont to remind us of this in proof that those eminent virtues which the Christian Religion enjoins did not originate with, and are not therefore the exclusive property of it. They point to those virtues elsewhere in the *Morals of Plutarch*, in the *Lives of Suetonius*, in the *Letters of Pliny*, in the *Annals of Tacitus*, in the *Odes and Satires of Horace*. And undoubtedly they are there, associated, indeed, with much that the world has since condemned as not only foolish but worse; still, they are there, and scepticism has culled them out and woven them into a chaplet whose moral beauty it claims will compare not unfavorably with that exalted righteousness which the Christian Religion reveals. Let the claim be allowed, and instead of making against Christianity, it only serves to show in a marked and signal manner

how powerless is a perfect code without a perfect life. Surely I need not tell again and in this presence what has been so often and by so many told, and can be by none denied; that conduct in that classical age was as bad as its teachings were good, and that while the noblest things were commended in letters, the most revolting excesses were practiced. Horace extols in admirable verse the qualities of the just man, who, even amid falling worlds, is true to his high and noble aim, and keeps his mind firm; and then speaks of the perishing empire whose wickedness is so great as to be past expiation, and beyond all hope of reform. "We have reached that point," says Livy, "when we can neither bear our vices nor the remedies for them." "There is nothing further," says Juvenal, "that posterity can add to our evil habits, for every vice is standing now at its topmost summit," and from Tacitus we learn that the practice of virtue, while

lauded in letters, was equivalent to the sentence of death: but the story is common-place and does not need reiteration here. Out of its own mouth is that generation condemned, and the same classical literature which reflects its glory is the mirror of its shame, for while it teaches a morality, that will compare not unfavorably with the righteousness of the Christian Religion, it reveals at the same time the existence of a moral corruption equal to if not greater than that which St. Paul himself has attributed to it in his Epistle to the Romans. Righteousness, therefore, in order to be authoritative, must not only get into letters: it must also get into life; and no more striking illustration of this does history present than that which is furnished by the Roman world at the opening of the Christian era. But why seek for illustrations in history when we can so easily find them in ourselves? Society is, after all, but a collection of personal

units, and what is true in the smaller sphere of the individual life, we may be sure is equally true in the larger sphere of the social; and do we not know from our own experience that sentiments and ideas, however good and true, have in fact but little power over us until we can come into contact with some personal embodiment and incarnation of them. Here is the secret of that wonderful influence, which we all feel, of the drama and the novel, two of the strongest educational factors in our modern social economy. They put the fine and admirable, but vague and unappealing sentiment before our very eyes, they clothe it in flesh and blood; we see it, we hear it talk, and laugh and sing and cry, we go out with it on its journey and come back with it on its return, we follow it on its daily rounds and eat and drink and live with it in all its hopes and fears, its hatreds, jealousies, loves, temptations, sorrows and sins, and stand at last by its

dying bed, and the sentiment which otherwise would have made but little if any impression, exerts, for a time at least, a masterful influence over us. And if that be the case, with the sentiment in fiction, much more is it the case when we see the sentiment not on the boards of a theatre or in the pages of a novel, but in veritable life. Then it is raised to the highest pitch of power; we cannot put it aside, we cannot call it in question, we cannot say as we close the book or go out of the door, it was very fine indeed, but after all, in our work-a-day world, it is impracticable, for it has been practiced embodied, realized, done, and, spite of all our previous notions, we cannot fail thereafter to be more or less influenced by it. This is the way in which righteousness gets control over us, and this is the way—for what is true in the little is equally true in the large—in which it gets control over mankind in general. The theory becomes a practical power in



society when somebody puts it in practice, and if it be true, as history shows, that the world has made some progress in the acquisition of goodness, that power is not so much due to the teachers of goodness as to those who have bodied forth with a strong and appealing sanction that goodness in their lives. I do not forget what I have already said, that all teaching ultimately tends towards conduct, neither do I forget that it is not towards the conduct of the many that it gravitates at first, but towards the conduct of the few, the very few. Here and there some doors are opened to admit it, some lives are found ready at any price—not infrequently of life itself—to receive it. It enters in, it captivates, it takes possession of them, and through these few individual incarnations of it, these heroes and martyrs, these victims of the cross, destitute, afflicted, tormented, cast out and rejected by the world, and of whom the world was not

worthy, it finds its way slowly but surely towards the many, who, seeing its noble conduct, feel its quickening power, and to whom, thus lifted up before their eyes who have pierced it, it becomes the power of God unto salvation. Whatever then be the ultimate data of ethics, whatever be the origin of that moral sense in man, whether an evolution or a special creation, which differentiates him from the brute, which follows him like his shadow, which cleaves to him like his breath, which never leaves nor forsakes him, which is forever saying to him in the language of Ruth to Naomi: "Where thou goest I will go, where thou lodgest I will lodge, where thou diest, there and only there will I die, and there will I be buried"—whatever be the origin of the moral sense, this at least is its sanction, not goodness in the book or speech, but goodness in personality, goodness made alive, "which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, which

our hands have handled," a fact which we cannot deny, an authority which we cannot impeach, a force which follows us everywhere and from which we cannot escape. Then, and only then, as all experience shows, does goodness become an inspiration to us and exert its power over us, for only he whose life is lightning, as the old proverb says, can make his words thunder.

Now having fetched this compass, and made this long detour, we are prepared to answer the question which at present we are considering. Is our civilization in its moral features the product of Jesus Christ? Whose else can it be, or how else can we account for it? Something must have produced it, for in the moral as in the physical world, there can be no effect without an adequate cause. Where can we find the cause of Christendom, the power that produced it, gave it birth, called it into existence? Eighteen hundred years ago a new moral phenom-

enon, a new kingdom of righteousness appears upon the earth. Not new in the sense that it then created that righteousness, for righteousness is old, as old as God, and therefore has always been latent and to some extent apparent in human life; but in the sense that it gave a new and more complete expression to it:

“Just as Justinian’s pandects only make precise  
What simply sparkled in men’s eyes before,  
Twitched in their brow, or quivered in their lip,  
Waited the speech they called, but would not come,”

So had the world called for righteousness, and for the most part called in vain, until at last, in Christendom it appeared as it had never appeared upon the earth before. What had been true in letters became true in fact. The precepts of philosophy were translated into action; the virtues sung by poets were exhibited by martyrs; the strains of classical oratory found their way into conduct,

and have spoken since to the heart of mankind with an irresistible eloquence through the deeds that were done by "weavers, shoe-makers and slaves." That ancient world was transformed: It became a new era in history, changing its times and seasons, giving a new calendar to it, a new method of computation, and a new kingdom of righteousness was established on the earth, in which, not those who said with fine and admirable speech, but those who did, were subjects; and whose least disciple, measured by this standard, was greater than the greatest born of womankind, by any other test. Here is the fact; where is the explanation? The accomplished historian of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" may try to explain the fact of that great moral awakening by referring it to what he is pleased to call a series of secondary causes, such as the zeal of the primitive Christians, and the discipline of the primitive church; but is

not this like trying to explain the daylight without the sun. Righteousness comes into society, and is made effective there through the enforcing sanction, not of a righteous code, but of a righteous life; and if that be true, the principal cause of the origin of Christendom, to which the secondary causes must themselves be referred, could have been nothing less than the life of a Jesus Christ. Given that, and the sudden leap of Christendom into being becomes intelligible to us; denying that, and there is no process, I submit—if men and women then were in any sense like men and women now—by which we can explain it. Observe; I am not claiming at present that the life of Jesus Christ is an historical life. As far as my present argument is concerned, it may have been fictitious, unreal, untrue, legendary, a literary growth and expansion. That is a matter which I have already considered in my previous lecture. My point now is

this, that whether or not it was historical, it was believed to be, and that it was that belief in the historical reality of the life of Jesus Christ that called into being the high and pure morality of the apostolic age. That was the power that produced it; that was the cause that created it; that was the high source from which its high life flowed. Men there were in that primitive society who gave up all they possessed, and sacrificed their lives for what they believed to be true, not because some philosopher in Athens, or some rhetorician in Rome had discoursed in beautiful strains upon the nobleness of such disinterested action, but because they saw, or thought they saw, such action illustrated in One who said, "To this end was I born; for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth;" and they were willing and glad to suffer for the truth in His name. Women there were in that same society who, forsaking

kindred and home, acquiesced in exile, or calmly submitted to torture, or bravely went to the stake, not because these things were easier then than now, or because some system of stoical ethics had taught the duty of patience in adversity, but because they witnessed, or thought they witnessed, that patience shining forth so brightly in the life of One who said, "Whoso loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me;" and they were trying to be patient in His name. In His name they practiced the forgiveness of injuries; in His name they cast out devils from themselves and others; in His name they spoke with those new tongues of charity that had never before been heard upon the earth; in His name they took up serpents and scorpions in human form, warmed them in their bosom and transfigured them by their love; in His name they did many wonderful deeds, and no deadly thing could either hurt or appall them. Christendom



sprang into being through the quickening power of the life of Jesus Christ, His product then, as it has been His product ever since. Its story of triumph is His story; its fairest work is His work; its noblest speech is His speech; its purest life is His life; its finest and most unselfish thoughts, are the thoughts which He has inspired; and what He began to do in Galilee and Judæa long ago, He has continued to do. I do not forget, I am not permitted to forget, what with shame I have to confess, that the so-called Christian world has not always been Christlike, and that many things have also been done in His name, which were not worthy of Him. And yet while this is true, that there has been much alloy mingled with the gold, it is equally true that there has been some gold, some fine gold;

“Virgin as oval tawny pendent tear,  
At bee-hive’s edge, when ripened combs o’erflow,”

and that qualities are seen in Christendom, manly strengths, womanly virtues, domestic sanctities, a high regard for duty, a pure devotion to truth, a disinterested benevolence, a charity that thinketh no evil, that suffereth long and is kind, and that gathers in its wide embrace all conditions of men ; that qualities are seen in Christendom, than which nothing finer is conceivable, and which indicate the presence there of some vital force that cannot be found outside. And if it be true that righteousness comes into society at large through the enforcing sanction, not of a righteous code, but of a righteous life, what could that vital force have been but the life of Jesus Christ. Neither do I forget, what, again, I am not permitted to forget and have no desire to, that the fine moral qualities which distinguish the Christian world from all other nations, have not been exhibited exclusively by the Christian Church, and that many there are who

have manifested, and manifest to-day without apparently any help from Christ or any need of His help, that high and pure morality which He illustrates and enjoins. It must not be forgotten, however, that the personal influence of Jesus Christ, like that of every one else, does not move only on straight lines, and that those who seem to be indebted to Him the least, have, nevertheless, been touched and quickened by Him. They subscribe, perhaps, to no creed, they belong to no church, they have no Christian faith, they glory, it may be, in their emancipation from it and seek to overthrow it, yet, spite of all this, coming into daily contact as they must and do at many different points with Christian law and custom, with Christian thought and speech, with that Christian standard which everywhere in our civilization "takes account of right or wrong in man," the personal power of Jesus Christ is upon them. And when, at times, moved

by that humanitarian impulse which He has imparted to Christendom and which cannot be eliminated therefrom, they try, as Professor Huxley tells us we ought all to try, to make some little corner of the world, as the rookeries of London, for instance, or the bagnios of Paris, or the slums of New York, less wretched and miserable, to redeem the degraded and gather in the outcast and give to them a better and purer conception of life, they find that the words of Christ somehow come to their lips, as spite of themselves His spirit is in their hearts, and that they are compelled to go upon their works of brotherly love and mercy in His name. They recognize no allegiance to Him, and yet He is among them, and seeing His presence there we are moved to exclaim with those wondering disciples who unexpectedly found their Master on the other side of the lake, "Rabbi, how camest thou hither?" And yet it is not surprising, for, as I have said, the personal

influence of Jesus Christ does not move only on straight lines, and is wider in its range than those ecclesiastical channels in which, with a misguided zeal, we sometimes try to confine it. It has been diffused through all our society, and all our institutions to some extent reflect it, our schools, our courts of justice, our marts of trade, our halls of state, our statutory enactments, our homes, our social relations, as well as our Christian churches. The rule of Jesus Christ is in our secular life, our culture, our civilization, "which simply is such rule's embodiment," and men can no more cast it off and escape it than they can subtract themselves by an effort of the will from the environment in which they are placed. It is indeed through these secular forms and agencies that His influence is often most effectually felt and His kingdom of righteousness established on the earth. His spirit is more or less in them; His power pervades and moulds them; His teaching

forms and guides them, His dominion over men is asserted through them, and His final victory—so I believe and so I think the Scriptures teach—will be accomplished by them: for when St. John the Divine, in his vision of the future sees the ultimate triumph of the Christian religion in this world, he sees that triumph approaching, not in the form of a church, but in the form of a city, the symbol of secular life, a new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. And what will the ultimate triumph of the Christian religion be—what can it be but the ultimate triumph of One, whose own personal embodiment of an ideal righteousness has insinuated that righteousness more and more into the manifold life of the world and made it at last ascendent and victorious there? Here, then, at this point, is our argument: If the power of goodness be greater than the power of evil, and if goodness becomes powerful only when,

and in the same proportion that it is bodied forth in personality, the goodness which we find in our secular life proceeds from, and is, the goodness of Jesus Christ; and when eventually that goodness becomes triumphant—as eventually it will—although His name may not appear in the process, it will appear in the end, for it will then be seen that the triumph of goodness in this world is the triumph of Jesus Christ, and the final result will crown Him Lord of All. The traveller who visits the City of Rome to-day finds amid the ruins of that famous metropolis a column of marble built by the Roman Senate and people in memory of Trajan, and upon which there are upwards of two thousand bas-reliefs, setting forth in spiral course the military achievements of that illustrious Cæsar. On the top of that doric shaft there stands at the present time, however, not the statue of the Emperor, which has long since been taken down, but of that great Christian apostle, as

though it all led up to and found its appropriate consummation in him to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given, as the representative of the Christian righteousness and faith.

Looking back over the history of our civilization, we see a long succession of secular events, discoveries, inventions, achievements, military conquests, industrial developments, social revolutions, scientific researches, philosophic findings, a long succession of events, correlated one with another, and leading up to our present complex economy, and having no connection, apparently, with Jesus Christ. But the true trend of events is not often distinctly seen until it reach the goal. What that goal will be, looking at the events themselves, we cannot always say, but bearing in mind the principle upon which I have been insisting and the truth of which all history confirms, that righteousness is made effective through the enforcing sanction of some personal life



which has bodied it forth, and seeing in Jesus Christ a life which has been, up to the present time at least, the world's ideal of righteousness, and than which for the future no higher and purer form is thinkable, it does not require much power of divination to be able to see that the long succession of secular events, if it be moving on towards righteousness, towards the moral victory of human life in this world, is moving on towards the victory of Jesus Christ, and that His kingdom will ultimately be established over all; that all forms of human pursuit will eventually acknowledge Him, that all departments of human knowledge will pay their tribute to Him, that all the aspirations of the human heart in art, in letters, in music, in philosophy, in science, will reach their consummation in Him, and that even the voice crying in the wilderness, uncertain where to find Him, and which can only say, "Perform the immediate duty and be content with the

wages which it gives you," will exclaim at last with peace and joy, "Behold the Lamb of God!" and "Crown Him Lord of All!"

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" "Come and see."

And now let me take the final step in the argument: What is this good thing that has come out of Nazareth, and by what name shall we call it? Here, too, let us adopt, not the metaphysical nor the theological, but the experimental method. Seeing what Jesus Christ has been and done in history, we can see what He is. If it be true that His power has shown itself to be different from and greater than that of all great men combined, it must be other than human, as we know the human—it must be divine. If Time, the great destroyer, which weakens the influence of every one else, has not in the least impaired it, it must have proceeded from an eternal source; without any finite limitations to it, as far as we can

perceive, in its range of action, it must have proceeded from an infinite source ; overcoming all obstacles, and obstacles too which others have found insurmountable, it must have proceeded from something like an omnipotent source : without a sufficient or adequate cause or explanation in human nature, as we know human nature, it must have proceeded from an absolute source : free from every evil taint and making exclusively for righteousness, it must have proceeded from a perfect source. Perfect, absolute, omnipotent, infinite and eternal ; these, the positive philosopher tells us, are unthinkable terms, conveying no definite meaning to us, and which we have no right to employ. And so, perhaps, in the abstract and up in the air, they are unthinkable terms ; but looking at the power of Jesus Christ, at what He has been, and done, and is doing in human affairs, and comparing that power with all others that have energized in history,

we can truly say, using in part the language of an English theologian, that while in themselves indeed these are unthinkable terms, yet, as far as we can enter into their apprehension at all, we see them in Jesus Christ, and that for us at least, and as far as we are concerned, "the Absolute was born at Bethlehem, the Perfect died on Calvary, the Omnipotent rose at Easter, the Infinite ascended from Bethany, and the Eternal came down at Pentecost." Thus do we reach the conviction, not by the subtle process of metaphysical analysis ; not by the delicate balancings of textual study ; but by looking at facts, by the positive method of experience ; that among all the sons of men there is none like unto the Son of Man : that Jesus Christ wielding a sceptre invincible and divine, is on the throne in this world, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, God manifest in the Flesh. The historical Christ is the moral power of history, and the historical Christ is God.

1889

*FOUNDERS' DAY*

AT

GAMBIER



# FOUNDERS' DAY.

## ORDER OF SERVICE.

### *ALL SAINTS' DAY.*

NOVEMBER 1, 1889.

#### *OFFICIATING PERSONS.*

THE TE DEUM. . . . .	{ Kenyon College Choir.
ANTE-COMMUNION . . . . .	{ Rev. Prof. J. Stei- bert.
THE EPISTLE . . . . .	{ Rev. H. W. Jones, D.D.
THE GOSPEL . . . . .	{ Rev. Prof. E.C. Ben- son.
FOUNDERS' MEMORIAL . . . . .	{ Rev. Wm. B. Bodine, D.D., President of Kenyon College.
DOXOLOGY.	
PRAYER FOR THE INSTITUTIONS.	{ Rt. Rev. Wm. A. Leonard, D. D., Bishop of Ohio.
HYMN 232.	
THE FIRST LECTURE . . . . .	{ Rev. David H. Greer, D. D., Rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, N. Y.
HYMN 202.	
OFFERING FOR FOUNDERS' SCHOLARSHIP.	
MATRICULATION OF KENYON COLLEGE.	
THE HOLY COMMUNION . . . . .	{ Rt. Rev. Wm. A. Leonard, D. D., Bishop of Ohio.
THE SECOND LECTURE AT 4 P. M.	





## Founders' Day at Gambier,

1889.

WE REMEMBER BEFORE GOD this day the Founders of these Institutions: Philander Chase, the first Bishop of Ohio, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, whose foresight, zeal, unwearied patience, and indomitable energy devised these foundations, and established them temporarily at Worthington, but permanently at Gambier. He was *the Founder*, and did a great and lasting work; Charles Pettit McIlvaine, the second Bishop of Ohio, rightly known as the second Founder, whose decision of character and self-devoted labors saved the work at two distinct crises of difficulty; he builded Bexley Hall for the use of the Theological Seminary, Ascension Hall for the use of Kenyon College, Milnor Hall for the use of the Grammar School, and he completed Rosse Chapel on the foundations laid by Bishop Chase.

We remember before God this day pious and generous persons, contributors, whose gifts enabled the Bishops of Ohio to lay those foundations, and who are therefore to be named among the Founders.

Among the many, we name only a few, whose gifts are noticeable because of the influence of the donors or the largeness of their gifts.

Henry Clay, whose introduction of Bishop Chase to the Admiral Lord Gambier, of England, initiated the success of the movement in 1823; the Archbishop of Canterbury; the Lord Bishops of London, Durham, St. David's, Chester, and Lichfield; Lords Kenyon, Gambier, and Bexley; Sir Thomas Ackland; the Rev. Drs. Gaskin and Pratt; William Wilberforce, Henry Hoare, Timothy Wiggin, George W. Marriot, and Thomas Bates; the Dowager Countess of Rosse, who aided liberally the Chapel which afterwards bore her name; Hannah More, who also bequeathed a Scholarship which bears her name; and more than five hundred others, whose names are recorded in the Memorial prepared by the Rev. Dr. Bronson at the request of the Trustees.

We remember before God the liberality of William Hogg, from whom this domain was purchased, the grantor contributing one fourth of its market value.

In 1828, John Quincy Adams, then President of the United States, John Jay, Arthur Tappan, Dudley Chase, and more than nine hundred others, whose names are recorded.

These were the first Founders of these Institutions.

Among those who aided Bishop McIlvaine we mention before God to-day, in England, besides members of the Royal Family, Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta; the Bishops of London, Winchester, Salisbury, and Lichfield; Henry Roberts, Architect; Wm. E. Gladstone; an Emigrant Well

Wisher, a little boy in Dorsetshire, and more than four hundred others whose names are recorded.

And in the United States, Bishops White, Eastburn, and Meade; the Rev. Drs. Milnor, Muhlenberg, and Tyng; the Rev. Archibald M. Morrison, Peter G. Stuyvesant, Charles Hoyt, Charles D. Betts, Mrs. C. A. Spencer, John D. Wolfe, James F. Sheafe, Dr. John Johns, Erastus Burr, Heman Dyer, and more than nine hundred others whose names are recorded.

And last the Philanthropist, George Peabody, the friend of Bishop McIlvaine, who, in token of that friendship, founded the Professorship that bears his name.

We mention before God this day, among the men who have done most for Kenyon's upbuilding, that great and good man, William Sparrow; Marcus T. C. Wing, than whom no one ever toiled more wisely or more abundantly; Alfred Blake, the unselfish friend of everything good; Lorin Andrews, devoted to education, his country, and his God; Robert S. French, through whose efforts the clock and the full set of nine bells were provided; Mardenbro White, who labored lovingly for Gambier for many long years; Sherlock A. Bronson, whose patient continuance in well doing will surely win a rich reward; and Eli T. Tappan, the cultured scholar, the accomplished educator, the strong, brave, true man, the Christian gentleman, who, but a little more than a year ago, entered the rest of Paradise. These

must always be counted among the best and most useful of the Founders of these Institutions.

The third Bishop of Ohio, with the aid of Stewart Brown, Wm. H. Aspinwall, Samuel D. Babcock, and other members of the Church of the Ascension, in New York, builded the Church of the Holy Spirit, this beautiful House of Prayer in which we gather to-day; through him, Mrs. Bowler founded the Professorship which bears the name of her husband, R. B. Bowler, who, with Larz Anderson, Wm. Proctor, and others, founded the McIlvaine professorship; Jay Cooke founded the Professorship which bears his father's name; Frank E. Richmond founded the Hoffman Library Fund; Augustus H. Moss and M. M. Granger rendered most valuable aid; Robert H. Ives and wife gave generously; Thomas H. Powers, Wm. Welsh, John Bohlen, and others in Philadelphia, completed the Bedell Professorship. By the same Bishop and his wife the organ was placed in the Church, as a memorial of the second Bishop of the Diocese, and the Episcopal Chair, as a memorial of the great Founder. The loving devotion of Bishop and Mrs. Bedell has been most liberal and unceasing, and has given them an unsurpassed place among the friends and Founders of these Institutions. Our thoughts go out towards them to-day in sympathy, in gratitude, in affection, and in fervent prayer.

We mention with thanksgiving the more recent gifts obtained through the solicitations of the President of Kenyon College, from Dr. J. T.

Hobbs, Rutherford B. Hayes, John Gardiner, Peter Hayden, H. S. Walbridge, Samuel L. Mather, Wm. J. Boardman, H. P. Baldwin, M. A. Hanna, and others, whose names are recorded. Through him, Mrs. Mary N. Bliss erected Hubbard Hall for the use of the Library; Henry B. Curtis and John W. Andrews gave largely for Scholarships, which from generation to generation will foster sound learning; and Columbus Delano provided a fund for the use of the Observatory, and erected the hall which bears his honored name. We devoutly trust that all these gifts have gone up as a memorial before God, and that their usefulness will go on increasing with the progress of the years, blessing alike the recipients, and the donors, and their descendants.

To these is now to be added our most recent gift of five thousand dollars from the late Charles T. Wing, the annual income of which is to be expended under the direction of the Trustees of Kenyon College, in beautifying his native village of Gambier, "in the planting of trees, turf, and shrubs, but not in grading or other work usually performed by the local authorities," and in caring for the graves of his dear parents, his brothers and sisters, who sleep well beneath the oaks of our College Park.

*The Congregation Rising.*

For all these generous gifts of the living, and for the memory of the dead, who were the Founders of these Institutions, we give hearty thanks

to God this day; ascribing the praise of their benefactions to His Almighty Grace, and the glory of His Most Holy Name, who is the God of our Fathers and our God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one Adorable Trinity, for ever and ever. Amen.













